SIMPLIFICATION OF LABORATORY METHODS.

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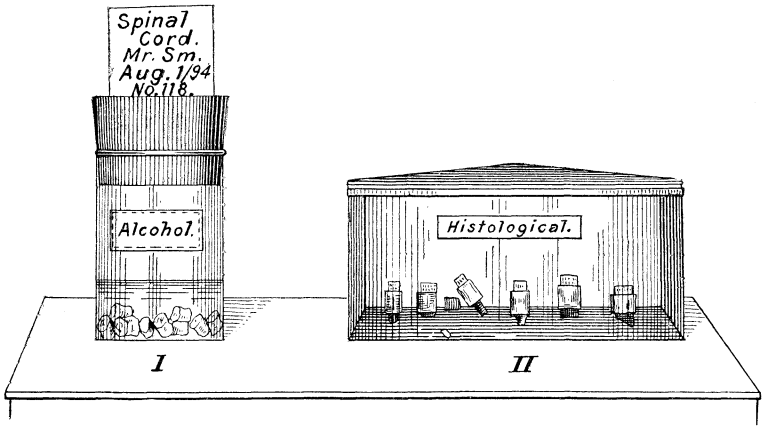
The two great drawbacks in the prosecution of the microscopical sciences are the want of time for laboratory details, and the expenditure of money for the minor needs of the laboratory. The microscopist working in his private laboratory, and the medical college professor who has but little time and small appropriations, are the ones who are most interested in any effort to ameliorate the existing state of affairs, and to these my paper is especially directed. The time and annoyance spent in labelling each particular tissue and the money expended in the purchase of innumerable storage bottles, aggregates to no small amount at the end of the year. As far as I know, no satisfactory plan has been devised to remedy this evil, and for one to attempt to work without labelling each specimen would be as unscientific as the present method is uneconomical. The method which I pursue in my laboratory is as follows:

After the tissues have been cut into cubes preparatory for hardening, they are placed in wide-mouth bottles fitted with cork stoppers; through the center of the upper surface of these corks is cut a groove one-half centimeter deep. Into this groove is shoved a piece of card board about two centimeters square, upon which is written the name of the tissue, where and when it was procured, and the reference to the case book describing the symptoms and the post-mortem findings. (Figure I.)

After hardening, the tissues are then imbedded, and are consequently placed in the absolute alcohol, the card board label being transferred at the same time to the bottle containing the alcohol; it is then transferred along with the tissues to the bottle containing the alcohol and ether, and finally to the bottle containing the

collodion solution. The tissues are now fixed on corks, the upper surfaces of which are likewise grooved, and into each cork is placed a card board label with the necessary inscription. The specimens on corks are then allowed to float in a large brain jar partly filled with alcohol, 80° to 85 per cent., and are stored here until required for section cutting. (Figure II.)



After sufficient sections have been cut at any one time the card board label is replaced and the specimen allowed to swim about in the large storage jar. The tissues are entirely immersed in the alcohol and may be kept in this way for years, care being taken to keep the alcohol up to the required quantity necessary to swim the corks and to the necessary strength. If an investigator has a large number of cork-mounted tissues, some histological—some pathological, or many specimens from the different organs of the body, the storage jars may be correspondingly labelled. This will enable him to seek out any particular tissue without much delay. (Figure II).

I have pursued this plan now for more than four years and know that it has saved me much time and my college considerable money, hence I recommend it to my co-workers in microscopy.